

Contributed

THE PASSER-BY.

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by,
Is it nothing to you, that thousands of souls
Are groping in darkness and longing for light?
Is it nothing to you, that a helping hand
Might win them forever for God and right?
Is it nothing to you—your Lord's command,
To garner the sheaves while the fields are white?
Why do you tarry? The harvest is night!
Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?

Is it nothing to you that the Savior died?
That He calls you to work in His fields today?
Is it nothing—this blood from His wounded side
Can wash every sin, every stain away?
You cannot be neutral! You must decide!
Is your hand on the plow? Oh! turn not away,
For the time is short and the moments fly,
Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?

Is it nothing to you, all ye that have washed
In the blood that was shed on Calvary?
Is it nothing to you, all ye rich of earth,
As you take your ease amid luxury?
Is it nothing to you, ye that idly wait
Till the morning wanes and the day grows gray?
The outcast's woe and the orphan's cry;
Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?

Is it nothing to you, that the time draws near?
That the Lord of the Harvest has tarried long?
Is it nothing to you that the growing wheat
Is marred by the tares so thick and strong?
Should the cry go forth, that the Master comes,
Could you welcome Him with a glad new song?
For sad and bitter will be your cry,
If He find you wanting and pass you by.

—John Richard Moreland.

THE DENVER ASSEMBLY DELIVERANCE.

By Rev. Wm. R. Henderson, D. D.

At the recent meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., in Denver, Dr. Wm. H. Roberts, as chairman of the Union Committee, submitted a report covering some points involved in the union between the Northern and Cumberland Presbyterian Churches. The report, or paper, deals chiefly with the doctrinal issue. This report was adopted by the Assembly, and in so doing the Assembly re-affirmed the action of the Assemblies of 1904 and 1906, declaring that the systems of doctrine of the Confessions of the two Churches were in such agreement as to warrant their union.

Probably one of the first points which will arrest the attention of the reader of this Assembly deliverance will be the statements regarding the system of doctrine. (1). In the second section of this deliverance it is asserted that "It is the system of doctrine rather than the Confession of Faith that binds the members of our Church into unity in doctrinal beliefs." In the third section it is said that, inasmuch as the "Assembly in neither Church before the union" determined "the

exact contents of the system of doctrine," "therefore, the contents of the system of doctrine always have been, in both Churches, and are now in the reunited Church, not fully stated and adjudicated." If the doctrinal content of the phrase, "system of doctrine," is a theological terra incognita, upon what ground can it be asserted that "it is the system of doctrine rather than the Confession of Faith that binds the members of our Church into unity in doctrinal beliefs"? In other words, the Assembly has not officially declared what doctrines are involved in the "system of doctrine"; nevertheless, whatever they may be, they bind "the members of our Church into unity in doctrinal beliefs"!

(2). Is it true that the doctrinal content of the phrase, "system of doctrine," is involved in the uncertainty which the Denver deliverance suggests? It is, with all respect to the distinguished chairman of the committee which formulated this deliverance, simply begging the question to assert, as is virtually done in this deliverance, that there has never been any declaration or action of the General Assembly determining the doctrinal system of the Confession. No Assembly deliverance has ever been considered necessary, inasmuch as the doctrinal content of the phrase has been regarded as substantially settled from a very early period in the history of the Presbyterian Church in America. As Dr. Charles Hodge says, this phrase has "a fixed, historical meaning." Dr. Hodge further says: "The objection that it is an open question what doctrines belong to the system and what do not, and therefore if the obligation be limited to the adoption of the system, it can not be known what doctrines are received and what are rejected, is entirely unfounded. If the question, 'What is the system of doctrine taught by the Reformed Churches?' be submitted to a hundred Romanists, to a hundred Lutherans, to a hundred members of the Church of England, or to a hundred septs, if intelligent and candid, they would all give precisely the same answer. There is not the slightest doubt or dispute among disinterested scholars as to what doctrines do, and what do not, belong to the faith of the Reformed." Dr. Roberts himself was not always in the foggy condition of mind upon this point in which he now finds himself by reason of the critical situation of the "reunited Church" in Tennessee and Missouri. For only a few years before he entered upon the Cumberland union negotiations, he published a little treatise entitled "The Presbyterian System," in which he clearly defines the distinctive doctrinal position of the Presbyterian Church. On pages 16 and 17 he says: "The third element in the Confession is the distinctively Calvinistic, and consists of the doctrines which are ordinarily called the five points of Calvinism. These five points are: (1) Unconditional as opposed to conditional predestination; (2) definite atonement or particular redemption as opposed to indefinite atonement; (3) total as opposed to partial depravity; (4) efficacious as opposed to uncertain grace; (5) final as opposed to partial perseverance. These five points are the differentiating features of the Reformed or Presbyterian doctrine, the points which separate Calvinists from other evangelical Christians."